



Est Em [estem]

I flew to Istanbul
about five times.

K U Ş L A R



Kuslar

By Est Em

Chapter 1

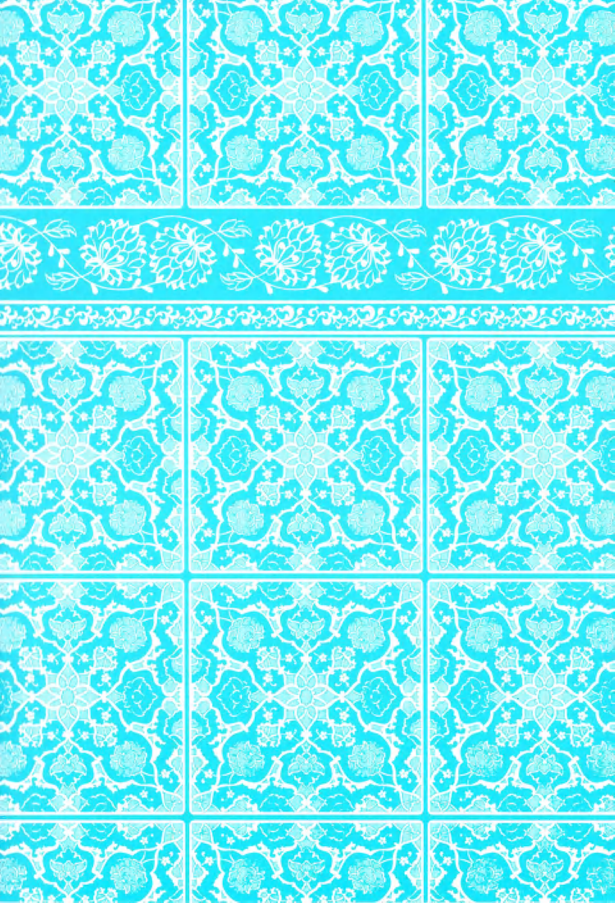
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KUŞLAR

E
S
t
E
m



kuşlar

005: Yılan [yılan]

040: Kuş [kuş]

085: Fare [fare]

117: Karınca [karınca]

151: 1800 [bin sekiz yüz]

169: Kuşlar - Bonus Track [kuşlar] - bonus track

178: Essay: Random notes about my research trip in Turkey.
I wandered on the borderline of the East and the West.



Y
-
l
a
n
Snake





THIS HAPPENED
WHEN I WENT
OUT FOR
HUNTING. AFTER
CHASING A HARE,
I CAME ACROSS A
HUGE SNAKE.



THE SNAKE
RAISED HIS
HEAD AND
STARTED
STARING AT ME.

WITH YOUR
SKILLS, YOUR
MAJESTY,
SHOOTING AN
ARROW THROUGH
IT MUST HAVE
BEEN SO EASY.

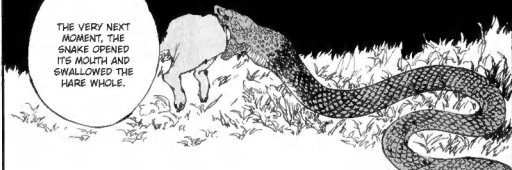


I DIDN'T
SHOOT THE
SNAKE.
WITHOUT
MOVING, I
LOOKED AT
THE HARE.



THAT WEAK
CREATURE WAS
JUST STANDING
THERE
MOTIONLESS,
SHIVERING...

THE VERY NEXT
MOMENT, THE
SNAKE OPENED
ITS MOUTH AND
SWALLOWED THE
HARE WHOLE.





WHAT'S
WRONG? YOU
LOOK LIKE AS
IF THE SNAKE
HAS BEEN
STARING AT
YOU.



WILL YOU
NOT LOOK
THIS WAY?



LAUGH!



*"Valide Sultan" was the title used for the reigning Ottoman sultan's mother.



HAHA!...

PFF...



HAHAHA!...



DID YOU
CALL FOR
ME, VALIDE
SULTAN*?



I TELL THE
GIRLS HERE
TO DRESS UP
AS MEN AND
VISIT HIS
CHAMBERS.



YOU
MEAN...



I DO NOT
KNOW WHAT
TO DO WITH
THAT BOY.



EVEN THOUGH
THEY ARE ALL
BEAUTIFUL
GIRLS, HE
DOESN'T SHOW
THE SLIGHTEST
INTEREST.



OF COURSE,
IT WOULD BE
ANOTHER STORY
IF THEY WERE
GOOD ENOUGH.

TRAIN THEM
AND SEND
THEM TO HIS
MAJESTY.

WHAT
ABOUT THE
PAGES?

THE BOYS
WE HAVE
NOW ARE
NO GOOD.



AS YOU
COMMAND,
MY SULTAN...



AS IF...

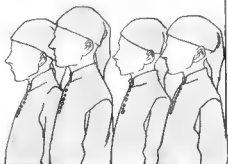
ENOUGH
WITH THE
JOKES.

IF IT'S TO A
EUNUCH LIKE YOU,
I WILL HAVE NO
QUALMS ABOUT
ENTRUSTING YOU
WITH THIS TASK.



This cage-like
palace is
everything in
the world to me.


Strong ones become
Janissaries. Ones
with sharp brains
are educated to
work as pages or to
become government
officials.



Young boys of
Christian faith are
gathered from the
different territories
of the Empire as
devşirme*.



I'm the one who
guides them.



I teach them how to read and how to write. I teach them about order and discipline.

Before long, their eyes start to sparkle,



realizing that they are the chosen ones.



I was jealous of those eyes.



YILAN*?



ISN'T THAT
PRECISELY
WHY HE'S
THE MAIN
INSTRUCTOR?

HE SPEAKS
ARABIC, PERSIAN,
AND EVEN FRENCH.
I WONDER WHERE
HE LEARN'T ALL
THAT.



I DON'T LIKE
THE LOOK IN
HIS EYES.



DOES THAT
BOTHER
YOU?



THE SULTAN, AND
ALSO THE VALIDE
SULTAN DO SEEM
TO FAVOR THIS
LOWLY EUNUCH...



IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN
FINE IF HE
WERE ONLY
A SMART
MAN.

I DON'T LIKE
HOW HE ALWAYS
SNEAKILY LOOKS
AROUND AS IF HE
WAS PLOTTING
SOMETHING.



HAHAHA!
SINCE HE'S A
EUNUCH, YOU
CAN'T REALLY
CALL HIM A
"MAN".

I AM SURE
THAT HE'S
AIMING TO
BECOME A
VIZIER
EVENTUALLY.

JUST AS
HIS NAME
SUGGESTS,
THIS MAN IS
LIKE A SNAKE.



BUT STILL,
THE SULTAN
WORRIES
ME.



WE ARE IN
THE PALACE,
BE CAREFUL
OF WHAT
YOU SAY!

AND ALWAYS
RETURNS
EMPTY-HANDED.

HE INDULGES
HIMSELF IN
POETRY AND
GOES ON
HUNTS
WITHOUT A
PURPOSE,



AND HE'S
NOT GOOD
AT WARFARE
EITHER.

HE SHOWS
NO INTEREST
IN POLITICS,

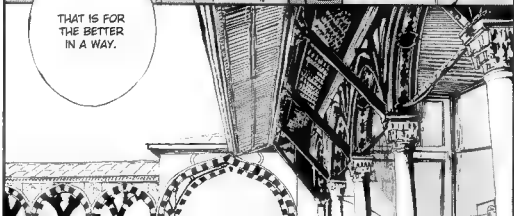


THE SULTAN
IS TOO
YOUNG AND
NOT ENOUGH
SELF-AWARE.

I'M ONLY
CONCERNED
ABOUT THE
FUTURE OF
THIS EMPIRE.



THAT IS FOR
THE BETTER
IN A WAY.







WHY?

WHY WILL YOU
NOT BECOME
MINE?



I BELONG
TO YOU,
YOUR
MAJESTY.



IF YOU WISH
SO, I SHALL
BRING ANY
PAGE YOU
WANT TO YOU.

BUT AS FOR
MYSELF, I AM
NOT ALLOWED
TO TOUCH YOU.



**YOUR
MAJESTY**
...

JUST TELL
THEM YOU
ARE FEELING
UNWELL AND
SEND THEM
AWAY.

WHAT IF
SOMEONE
COMES?

HOW
CAN YOU
SUGGEST WE
CHANGE OUR
CLOTHES!

IT'S FINE,
WILL YOU
NOT DO AS
I SAY?









YOUR
MAJESTY?



I AM
UNWORTHY OF
SUCH WORDS...

I REMEMBER
YOUR FACE
WELL.



!?



YOUR
MAJESTY?



HOW
WAS IT?

HOW DID
YILAN'S
FINGERS
FEEL? HIS
LIPS?



WHAT DID HE
WHISPER IN
YOUR EAR?

HOW
WERE HIS
SIGHS?





Ah...

WERE YOU
MOANING
WITH THE
SAME VOICE

WHEN YOU
WERE IN
YILAN'S
ARMS?





PLEASE
FORGIVE
ME...
YOUR
MAJESTY...

WHY
CAN'T
I...

WHY
CAN'T I
HAVE IT?





YILAN

...

HAS HE
FINALLY
LOST HIS
MIND?



HIS YOUNGER
BROTHER
SHOULD HAVE
SUCCEEDED
THE THRONE.

WHAT'S THE
MEANING OF
BEING A
RULER ■ YOU
DON'T HAVE
AN HEIR?

SO WHAT IF HE
KILLED A PAGE?
EVEN IF HE
KILLED TEN, IT
WOULD BE NO BIG
DEAL.

BUT IF HE
GOES ON LIKE
THAT, THERE
WILL NOT BE
AN HEIR.



CAN'T YOU
BE MORE
DISCREET?
THE RISK IS
TOO HIGH.

HE HAS
ALWAYS
BEEN FAR
FROM
POLITICS.

IF WE ARE
GOING TO
REPLACE HIM,
IS IT NOT
BETTER TO DO
IT SOONER?



BUT...



WHY, ALL WE
HAVE TO DO IS
TO MAKE HIM
DISAPPEAR.

HOW DO YOU
SUGGEST WE
GET HIM TO
ABDICATE?



WHAT A
FRIGHTENING
THING TO SAY...
WHO WOULD
WANT TO DO IT?



WHO COULD
IT BE?...



NO, I DO
NOT KNOW
ANYTHING.

I THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT
KNOW
SOMETHING
ABOUT IT.

I HAVE
HEARD SOME
UNPLEASANT
RUMORS.



HE IS MY
SON AS
WELL.

WHO IS
CURRENTLY IN
CONFINEMENT?

DO YOU
KNOW ABOUT
SULTAN'S
BROTHER



POOR THING...
HIS OLDER
BROTHER
HAS JUST
SUCCEEDED
THE THRONE.



I ALSO
BELIEVED HE
SHOULD HAVE
BECOME THE
SULTAN...

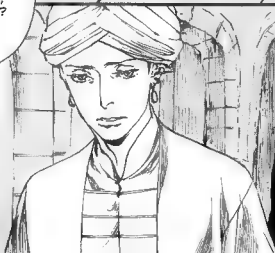
HE IS
SUCH AN
INTELLIGENT
BOY...



YOU ARE GOOD
AT SEARCHING
THE MEANING
BEHIND WORDS,
RIGHT?

HOWEVER, THIS
CONVERSATION
HAS NO DEEPER
MEANING.

ARE YOU
HERE,
YILAN?





IF I AM A
SULTAN WITH
NO HEIR, THERE
IS NO OTHER
CHOICE BUT TO
BURY ME.

I
JUST...

DO NOT LIE TO
ME. I AM NOT
SUCH A FOOL
THAT I WOULD
NOT KNOW
ABOUT IT.

HAS SOMEONE
SUGGESTED
YOU TO
ASSASSINATE
ME?



YES, I
REMEMBER.

WHEN I
SUCCEEDED THE
THRONE, YOU
SAID THE ENTIRE
WORLD WAS
MINE.



YOU SAID
EVERYTHING
THE EYE
COULD SEE
WAS MINE.

VAST
LANDS...
ENDLESS
SEAS...

THE PEOPLE...
ALSO, ALL THE
BEAUTIFUL
GIRLS IN THE
HAREM.



YES.

YOUR POWER
ALONE IS
KEEPING THIS
EMPIRE
TOGETHER.

ARE
THEY
STILL
MINE?

THERE IS NO
OTHER MONARCH
IN THE WORLD
WHO IS AS
POWERFUL AS
YOU.

HOW
STRANGE...

EVEN THOUGH I
HOLD SUCH
POWER, I CANNOT
MAKE A SINGLE
WISH OF MINE
COME TRUE.



OR ARE THEY
GOING TO MAKE
YOU A VIZIER
AFTER YOU
ACCOMPLISH THIS
TASK?



EVEN IF IT'S AN
ORDER FROM
THE GRAND
VIZIER, YOU
CANNOT EXPECT
TO WALK FREE
AFTER THIS.



AND YOU
WILL KILL
SUCH A
MONARCH.



THAT IS NOT
A BAD DEAL.



YOU ARE A
SNAKE-LIKE
MAN.



JUST LIKE
ALL MY
RETAINERS
SAY



IF I
COULD

I WOULD
LIKE TO BE
COMPLETELY
POWERLESS.

LIKE THAT
HARE THE
SNAKE
SWALLOWED.



VALIDE
SULTANI!



THE
PAGE...

ANOTHER
PAGE WAS
FOUND IN HIS
MAJESTY'S
CHAMBER...

AGAIN?

WHAT
ABOUT
HIS
MAJESTY?

WAS
WEARING
HIS
MAJESTY'S
CLOTHES...



WE HAVE
SEARCHED
EVERYWHERE
IN THE INNER
PALACE, BUT HE
IS NOWHERE TO
BE FOUND.



THE PAGE WHO
DIED WAS HIS
SWORD-BEARER.
HIS FACE
RESEMBLED HIS
MAJESTY'S...

...



THERE'S NO
NEED TO LOOK
FURTHER INTO
THIS MATTER.



MAKE SURE
THAT NEITHER
THE BLACK
ELINUCHS NOR
THE VIZIERS

HEAR
ABOUT THIS
DEAD PAGE.



HE SHALL BE
BURIED AS HIS
MAJESTY.

AS FOR THE
CORPSE OF
THE PAGE...



TELL THE
GRAND
VIZIER

THAT THE
SULTAN IS
DEAD.



HAVE YOU
HEARD? THEY
SAY THE SULTAN
IS DEAD.



FOOLISH
BOY...





REALLY?
DID HE
HAVE A
BROTHER?

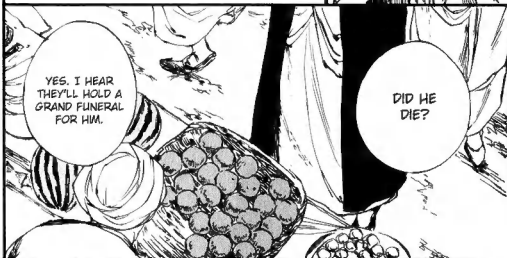
IT LOOKS LIKE
HIS YOUNGER
BROTHER WILL
BE THE NEXT
SULTAN.

SOME EVEN
SAY THAT HE
WAS KILLED.

POOR
THING, HE
WAS STILL
SO YOUNG...

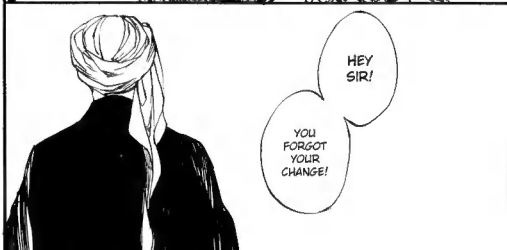


I'LL TAKE
THIS.



YES. I HEAR
THEY'LL HOLD A
GRAND FUNERAL
FOR HIM.

DID HE
DIE?



HEY
SIR!

YOU
FORGOT
YOUR
CHANGE!



BUT
SIR,

I MUST SAY
THAT YOU
HAVE VERY
NICE SLAVE
THERE.



I KNOW.
HE COST
ME QUITE
A LOT.



kuşlar